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New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 47, 113 and 149 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The President: We are meeting today to resume consideration of agenda items 47, 113 and 149 in order to discuss the progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): Madam President, we thank you for having convened this meeting in response to the request of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered this morning by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Movement.

As one of the two countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, Sierra Leone is grateful for this opportunity to contribute to this preliminary assessment by the General Assembly of the work of the Commission. We say "preliminary" because under operative paragraph 15 of resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the Commission is required to submit an annual report to the General Assembly. The Assembly is also required to hold an annual debate to review the report, as was noted by many delegations this morning.

The purpose of today's debate is not merely to assert the General Assembly's authority in the establishment and functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission. In the view of the Sierra Leone delegation, the current debate is intended to underscore the vital role that this new mechanism can and should play in assisting countries emerging from armed conflict.

The debate serves a third purpose. It is consistent with and serves as a reminder of the need to mobilize sustained international attention for the benefit of such countries — in other words, to ensure that the international community remains engaged well beyond the end of peacekeeping operations.

There is yet another reason for holding this debate. In our view, it is also intended to demonstrate that the Peacebuilding Commission is operational and that it requires the solidarity and support of all Member States and relevant organizations during this teething stage of its existence.

A good basis for an assessment of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission so far is document S/2006/1050, which contains the Chairs' summary statements of the country-specific meetings on both Burundi and Sierra Leone. It is also relevant in this context to take into account the relations between the Commission and the two specific countries on its

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agenda, namely Burundi and my country, Sierra Leone, as well as their perceptions about the Commission.

For its part, Sierra Leone believes that we must acknowledge that this is a high-profile mechanism. It emerged from the highest political level — the 2005 World Summit at the United Nations. Its establishment is regarded as one of the highlights of the ongoing reform processes in the Organization. It was made operational not by one, but by two of the principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Commission is closely linked to the functions of another new entity, namely the Peacebuilding Fund — one that could be described as the fuel tank of the new machinery.

For new and complex intergovernmental machinery that is less than a year old and one that is still, so to speak, trying to find its feet, the Commission is beginning to have a positive impact on the expectations of Sierra Leone. The Commission is learning from us, and we are also making our own modest contribution to what the Commission has achieved so far. Indeed, we are part of this new experiment in United Nations post-peacekeeping activities.

Sierra Leone facilitated the Commission's consideration of the country-specific agenda because we had already prepared our own national strategic development frameworks for post-conflict recovery leading to sustainable development. The three main components were the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Peace Consolidation Strategy and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). We had also identified four priority areas that pose critical challenges to our peace consolidation effort.

By the end of its first country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, the Commission had determined that Sierra Leone was eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund. Seven weeks ago, following the further review and revision of the Peace Consolidation Strategy, the Commission concluded that an initial assistance envelope of approximately $25 million was expected to be made available to us. It will be recalled that, in addition, the Commission has stressed that every effort should be made to deliver the Peacebuilding Fund country assistance envelope for Sierra Leone in January 2007.

Those are some of the important developments that are closely linked with our expectations and assessment of the Commission as a dedicated institutional mechanism to address our special needs.

A few days ago my delegation remarked that, as far as achieving the objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission is concerned, the bottom line is the availability and timely delivery of resources. By drawing attention to the resource aspect of peacebuilding we were not ignoring or underestimating the advisory and coordinating functions of the Commission. On the contrary, the Government is aware that this is an intergovernmental advisory entity. The Government is also aware of — and has expressed its commitment to — the integrated approach to peacebuilding. It also acknowledges that the Commission is also entrusted with responsibility for advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.

However, we must admit that the overwhelming majority of Sierra Leoneans — who are still struggling to make ends meet in an environment that is characterized as one of the least developed in the world and to cope with the disastrous consequences of a 10-year-long rebel war — find it almost impossible to understand anything about integrated strategies, strategy papers, reports and frameworks. Besides, as we stated in the Security Council last week (see S/PV.5627), our emphasis on the mobilization and timely delivery of resources for the special needs of countries emerging from conflict is actually derived from the two resolutions operationalizing the functioning of the Commission.

Our emphasis on resources is also based on an unfortunate experience in 1998, a year before the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed. The implementation of our modest but crucial national plan for the disarmament and demobilization of some of the former members of the Sierra Leone army who had been fighting with Revolutionary United Front rebels collapsed because of the lack of adequate and timely delivery of resources. I must say that history will tell to what extent, if any, that unfortunate experience contributed to the rebel military junta invasion of the capital city of Sierra Leone — Freetown — in 1999.

My delegation would like to reiterate its confidence in the Peacebuilding Commission. Its teething problems notwithstanding, the prospects of its fulfilling its mandate are very good. We note, for instance, that a draft outline of the country-specific

workplan for Sierra Leone and a draft calendar for the country-specific meetings of the Commission have been prepared, thanks to the Chairman of the Sierra Leone country-specific meetings, Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, and to Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway. We are pleased that my delegation was also consulted in the process of preparing the drafts. We also note with interest that work is already under way on lessons learned, coordinated by the Ambassador of El Salvador, Mrs. Carmen Gallardo Hernández.

My delegation would also take this opportunity to express its appreciation to all those who have made firm financial commitments to the Peacebuilding Fund. We commend the staff of the Peacebuilding Support Office, under the direction of Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie, the members of the country team, and all those who are directly involved in the task of assisting Sierra Leone in implementing its priority peacebuilding programmes and laying the foundation for sustainable development. In closing, let me add that our expectations are still high.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to associate myself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that are members of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Commission is involved in a process of consolidation, and its challenge for the future is the issue of its relevance. Since it is not a new donor entity — without prejudice to the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund — it is essential that the Commission be equipped with proper leadership for mobilizing and coordinating resources and efforts to cooperate with countries emerging from conflict.

In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission cannot and should not become an entity for academic debate. Rather, it should be proactive in advising and cooperating with those countries. To that end, it is essential to strengthen its link, as it has been doing, with the international financial institutions — the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional banks — as well as the community of donor countries.

Likewise, we believe that necessary measures must be adopted to ensure broad participation by all relevant sectors, including civil society, in the search for solutions to the most urgent problems faced by countries emerging from conflict.

We believe the role and the work of the Organizational Committee, as the directing entity of the Peacebuilding Commission, must be enhanced — especially the important format of country-specific meetings. We must also avoid competitive approaches that could weaken the Commission's work. To that end, we need concerted action between the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as proper coordination with the Economic and Social Council.

With a view to strengthening the work of the Organizational Committee, we propose establishing an annual timetable of formal meetings, leaving room for the flexibility to accommodate as many informal meetings as might be deemed necessary, in either the country-specific or another format.

We note with concern that discussions are still ongoing regarding how the work of the Peacebuilding Commission should be carried out. The national ownership discussion concerning how to determine and execute national priorities is, of course, a basic and undisputed premise. National priorities emerge from an internal process of consultations carried out by the national Government in which the various national sectors should participate.

But we believe that national priorities should also be determined on the basis of a two-track dynamic from which the Peacebuilding Commission cannot be excluded. According to paragraph 2 (a) of resolution 60/180, one of the main goals of the Peacebuilding Commission is "to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery".

In that context, we note with satisfaction that, during the months in which the Peacebuilding Commission has functioned, addressing the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, specific plans of action for both countries have been reviewed with the active participation of national authorities of the countries concerned and the valuable cooperation of the Peacebuilding Support Office. As recently recalled by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone, the Office has approved the disbursement of significant aid to both of those countries.

It is essential that the Organizational Committee have greater information about the realities on the

ground in Burundi and Sierra Leone. Therefore, we consider it a good idea to visit those countries to, inter alia, provide support through our presence on the ground. But each visit should be based on rotating regional representation and should be led by a delegation whose size makes it easy to travel and engage in productive dialogue with local authorities and all the relevant actors involved in peacebuilding processes.

My delegation also wishes to highlight the work being done by the representatives of Norway and the Netherlands in developing integrated peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone, which we will continue to discuss in a constructive spirit of goodwill. This year, we will also have to follow up on developments related to the implementation of agreed programmes. We will also have to endeavour to attract new resources for the Peacebuilding Fund. My country is committed to making every effort to cooperate to that end.

Finally, we believe that, at this point, it is essential that the Commission accord priority to active and concrete cooperation with countries emerging from conflict in order to ensure lasting peace.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission through parallel General Assembly and Security Council resolutions adopted in 2005 was one of the important and tangible achievements of Member States in reforming the United Nations. Experience shows that lasting peace and the effective settlement of armed conflict can be achieved only on the basis of a comprehensive approach.

All the more important, therefore, is the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, a truly unique body designed to fill a major gap in the international system for post-conflict peacebuilding. Although the Commission is still in its early stages, we share the high expectations placed in it. This organ has great practical potential and could become one of the most important mechanisms for the provision of international recovery assistance to post-conflict countries.

The Commission should be commended for the work it has done in its first six months of existence with regard to Burundi and Sierra Leone. We note the efforts made by the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Ismael Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola; by his two country coordinators, Mr. Johan Løvald, Permanent Representative of Norway, and Mr. Frank Majoor, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands; and by Mrs. Carmen Gallardo Hernández, Permanent Representative of El Salvador and Vice-Chairperson of the Commission. In addition, we cannot fail to welcome the excellent work done by the Peacebuilding Support Office, headed by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie.

We expect that this General Assembly meeting, like the open Security Council debate held on 31 January 2007 (see S/PV.5627), will serve as a forum for the exchange of views among interested parties in order to consider practical ways and means to better help the Commission carry out its mandate and to create conditions conducive to its effective and productive work.

The danger that conflict will reignite is always present in societies emerging from conflict. The transition from peacekeeping to post-conflict peacebuilding is fraught with difficulties. As long as some of the initial causes of the crisis remain, the situation will continue to be unstable. Hence, the Commission will play a crucial role, upon the request of the Governments concerned, in identifying, prioritizing and allocating donor resources that meet the needs of the relevant Governments in order to resolve all of these fundamental problems and carry out forward-looking tasks, while not encroaching upon the mandate of the Peacebuilding Fund. The Commission must be a reliable partner in assisting the Governments of post-conflict countries and is essential in helping them to achieve reconciliation and stability and in ensuring a smooth transition from conflict to sustainable peace and development.

However, the Commission should avoid being overambitious in its initial plans and should focus its resources on the adoption of practical and concrete measures. It is only through asserting and enhancing its prestige and authority through action at the outset that the Commission can earn a worthy reputation in the eyes of the international community.

We believe that the attention of the Peacebuilding Commission should be focused on transparent efforts related to the countries on its agenda, together with impartial collective analysis to identify its peacebuilding priorities, along with integrated strategies and programmes for realizing them. In that

regard, we look forward to its adoption of agreed pragmatic recommendations, which will be crucial for States receiving peacebuilding assistance and for all participants in this process.

Here, an important role must be played by the Peacebuilding Support Office. An important element of its work is to provide prompt and appropriate information to Commission members regarding the countries in question and to share up-to-the-minute experience gained in resolving interdisciplinary questions related to peacekeeping. Due consideration of the Commission's recommendations — coordinated with the Governments of countries receiving assistance — by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, other entities of the United Nations system, the donor community and other interested parties will enhance the coordination of post-conflict assistance and thus reduce the risk that crisis will re-erupt.

We welcome the establishment of the Peacebuilding Fund, which will serve as a catalyst in attracting much-needed yet often scarce financial resources for peacebuilding in countries that are at the earliest stages of emerging from conflict until traditional mechanisms for attracting donor aid begin to function. In the context of the Peacebuilding Fund, it would be undesirable for the Commission to be erroneously perceived as a donor entity, which it is not. We share the hopes expressed here today that the Fund's role will be clearly defined so that it can fully accomplish its task of facilitating collective peacebuilding efforts.

An important aspect of the Peacebuilding Commission is its efforts on the ground, aided by the country presence of the United Nations and by the donor community. In that connection, greater attention should be given to ensuring a harmonious and smooth interface between the activities of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Commission and those of existing coordination mechanisms, particularly within the United Nations system.

Of course, the Commission does not replace existing bodies. The principle of complementarity underlies the interaction between the Commission and other bodies in the United Nations family. We need interaction between the Commission and United Nations agencies, including in the field — interaction of a kind that does not undermine the Organization's existing system for operational activities, but rather strengthens it, including by taking account of the presence of specific programmes promoting cooperation with States receiving peacebuilding assistance that have been adopted by the executive boards of the relevant international agencies. We believe that the General Assembly is precisely the forum where Member States can find an answer to that question.

Strengthening the organic link between the Commission and the Security Council requires particular attention, particularly vis-à-vis the situations in Burundi and Sierra Leone, which are on the agendas of both bodies. It cannot be otherwise, given the indissoluble link among issues of peace, security and development. It is essential to ensure the timely exchange of information, a clear division of labour and complementarity between both bodies. Of course, that must be done in tandem with developing links between the Commission, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Indeed, the Peacebuilding Commission offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate in practice the usefulness of a comprehensive approach to the post-conflict recovery of countries emerging from conflict. We all know that this tendency is gaining momentum.

We believe that attention to the Commission by those two principal organs of the United Nations will be a guarantee of close constructive partnership and complementarity among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council with a view to achieving our common goal: enhancing the effectiveness of international efforts in the area of peacebuilding. We support the appeal for increased coordinated and complementary efforts to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission continues to mature in a streamlined and harmonious manner, which is now essential to the work of the global Organization.

Mr. Choi Young-jin (Republic of Korea): Let me join others in thanking you, Madam President, for this opportunity to discuss the important work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that, although the Commission has only recently become operational, it has already begun to play a role, and that the Peacebuilding Fund is in place. We are also pleased to note that at the two sets of country-specific meetings held so far, on Burundi and on Sierra Leone,

serious deliberations led to thoughtful recommendations on how to proceed with peacebuilding activities in those two States.

These developments are signs that the international community recognizes the growing importance of post-conflict peacebuilding. In recent years, the demand for peacekeeping activities has grown rapidly, and that trend seems likely to continue. Such missions are dangerous and costly, but the cost of unrestrained conflict is even greater. Member States have therefore come to recognize that preserving and stabilizing peace through sustained peacebuilding efforts is often a better investment.

My delegation is of the view that these early outcomes demonstrate the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission. Nevertheless, the Commission is still in its early stages, and we cannot yet pass judgement on its work. There are remaining procedural details to be ironed out; we hope that that process will be completed soon, allowing the Peacebuilding Commission to focus its attention more fully on its substantive work.

My delegation thinks that it is fair to say that the establishment of the Commission is a positive result of the Organization-wide drive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our work. Specifically, it will fill a gap by developing holistic, synergistic strategies to coordinate the peacebuilding work of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other actors, including the international financial institutions. By involving those institutions in debates on peacebuilding strategies, the Peacebuilding Commission will be able to enhance the coherence of peacebuilding efforts and improve the utilization of resources to achieve our goals.

We hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will be increasingly action-oriented, interacting with the relevant United Nations bodies and other actors and helping them to share information. At the same time, in order to build trust for its activities and to fulfil its promise of increased efficiency and coherence, the Peacebuilding Commission must strive to ensure that its work is transparent and open to oversight by Member States.

Member States demonstrated their collective wisdom in creating the Peacebuilding Commission. If the Commission is to fulfil its role, however, we need to ensure that it has the financial resources necessary to do so. To that end, the Republic of Korea has contributed $3 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. We hope that as the Peacebuilding Commission continues to demonstrate its value, as it has begun to do in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, Member States will respond by devoting greater resources to the Fund.

Beyond its important role in responding to the initial needs of post-conflict societies, the Peacebuilding Fund should also serve to keep international attention on post-conflict situations, prompting the international community to help with financing for crucial rebuilding and development work.

In terms of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in post-conflict societies, my delegation recognizes the concerns of many Member States regarding national ownership. In our view, it is neither possible nor desirable to build a sustainable peace without the active participation of the national authorities of the countries involved. No State can maintain its own peace and security without an effective Government; national Governments should therefore be strengthened, not weakened, by peacebuilding efforts.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that, in some cases, the very basis of the conflict is a dispute over national authority. Even when no question of legitimacy exists, conflicts can weaken and undermine Governments so severely that they are unable to function effectively. We believe that every effort should be made to identify, support and work with national authorities, and that national ownership of peacebuilding should be maintained as much as possible. In extreme cases, however, when there is a lack of competent national authority, the international community still has a responsibility to provide support for post-conflict peacebuilding.

The Republic of Korea is a strong supporter of international peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, we have our own history of recovery from conflict, and we recognize the tremendous value of international support. That is why we supported the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. We have also participated in United Nations activities in Timor-Leste and other post-conflict situations. Our commitment to the peacebuilding work of the United Nations remains firm, and we look forward to an increasingly proactive Peacebuilding Commission that can contribute significantly to United

Nations efforts to ensure peace, stability, development, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Madam President, for this timely open debate on a subject of great importance: the work done and the progress achieved by the Peacebuilding Commission. Like you, we believe that the General Assembly surely is the appropriate forum to address these questions, since in this forum all States Members of the Organization are on an equal footing.

As we have said on previous occasions, the Peacebuilding Commission was established to respond to our Organization's need for an institutional mechanism that could properly assist countries emerging from or at risk of relapsing into conflict, with a view to helping them to achieve peace as an indispensable phase of their development. Since the beginning of the negotiations aimed at the establishment of the Commission, the Argentine delegation participated actively in the discussions on various structural aspects, which ultimately led the adoption of resolutions in the Security Council and the General Assembly clearly setting out the main objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission: to focus attention on the reconstruction and consolidation of institutions that are necessary for post-conflict recovery and to lay the foundations for sustainable development. In our view, the Peacebuilding Commission is a fundamental instrument that will allow us to directly address activities aimed at the reconstruction and institutional recovery of States that have gone through conflict.

Likewise, the Peacebuilding Fund is the best way of ensuring foreseeable financing for initial recovery activities and thus prolonging the international community's focus on post-conflict reconstruction. The Fund will make it possible to "close the initial circuit" — that is to say, devise an emergency plan with foreseeable funding.

At the request of the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission has already held initial formal meetings to consider the situations in Burundi and in Sierra Leone, with the participation of the Governments of both countries.

In that respect, we would like to underscore the importance of participation by the countries concerned when their situation is being reviewed. Presentations by Governments, local authorities or representatives to the Commission make it possible to engage in a detailed analysis and offer a more comprehensive perspective of the realities on the ground. Such data allows for the more precise identification of priorities, taking account of the requirements and resources in each case.

On that basis, a timetable can be set up for the achievement of goals, and short-, medium- and long-term plans can be developed which must, in our view, be regulated by clear and precise guidelines set out by the Commission and must also accord with the spirit of the Organization and of the international community.

We believe that the report to be produced by the Commission containing these recommendations should also include mechanisms for the achievement of objectives and the implementation of plans, and that it should include monitoring machinery so as to avoid any misuse of funds. The Commission should ensure proper and effective use of the funds disbursed.

With regard to the two elements we have mentioned — clear and precise guidelines, and monitoring machinery — we would like to add another that we deem vital to the smooth and predictable functioning of this body: the establishment of rules of procedure and methods of work. We are aware of the fact that these are currently being developed by the Commission, and we trust that their prompt definition will contribute to improving its functioning, leading to fruitful results.

Before concluding, Argentina wishes to express its satisfaction at Panama's inclusion in the membership of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has made it possible to redress somewhat the imbalance in regional representation, which is an underlying principle of the Organization that has long been stressed by my country as well as by other Latin American nations.

My country welcomes the establishment of the Commission, whose work will complement the final phase of the recovery process in post-conflict situations and help to achieve reconstruction and the strengthening of institutions, in an endeavour to prevent any recurrence of conflict, because we know from experience that military operations are not sufficient to fully resolve a conflict.

Finally, I should like to say that while security is the primary pillar for achieving peace in any armed conflict, the task of the United Nations, I would recall, should always be to promote development and respect for and the defence of human rights. The work of the Peacebuilding Commission must therefore, in our view, also be aimed achieving those goals.

Ms. Hřebíčková (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic, too, was very pleased to participate in the debates leading to the eventual establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. We believe that the Commission is one of the real major achievements of the process of United Nations reform. That is why we were among the first countries to contribute to the Peacebuilding Fund.

We fully support the statement of the European Union presented by Germany today. The Czech Republic has become a new member of the Commission's Organizational Committee and, as such, would like to commit itself to making active contributions to the activities of both the Committee and the country-specific meetings. We view those meetings as crucial to success in the countries on the Commission's agenda.

Mr. Baja (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Czech Republic believes that the new organ should be action-oriented and should not be a hostage to bureaucratic procedural manoeuvres. It should act on the basis of mutual trust. In order to resolve the many difficult issues facing the Commission, the Organizational Committee and country-specific meetings should give priority attention to and focus on the concrete working plans produced by both the Burundi and Sierra Leone Governments, in close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Support Office.

We believe that one of the Commission's priorities should be to focus on early-warning mechanisms so as to identify potential setbacks and risks in the countries on the agenda. That would enable the Commission to better serve the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in identifying the optimal mix of measures and in taking effective, concerted action in building sustainable peace.

We are in a position to offer some capacity and know-how and thus assist in post-conflict democratic processes and in the protection of human rights. We know that overall reconstruction and rehabilitation cannot be complete without the full inclusion of civil society and the private sector. That is why we believe that all those elements should participate actively in the country-specific meetings.

It is crucial to focus on transitional justice projects and planning, because forgiveness is important to achieve reconciliation. However, permanent peace must be built on the foundation of the rule of law, the inclusion of civil society and free access to information. The Commission can only facilitate. We are firmly convinced that peace must be built, and kept, by domestic actors.

We believe that the role of the Peacebuilding Fund should be primarily catalytic. The amounts disbursed are, of course, important, but even more important, in our view, is choosing the right mix of projects directed at the most imminent post-conflict problems and requirements, without losing sight of overall peacebuilding strategies. We should not pretend that the Fund can finance all peacebuilding activities.

I can assure the Assembly that my country is ready to cooperate fully to ensure that the initial work of the Peacebuilding Commission is successful.

Mr. Tarragô (Brazil): My delegation would like to thank Ms. Al-Khalifa for having convened this meeting to review the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, in response to the request made by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. This meeting is a follow-up to the initiative of the Russian Federation, which organized an open debate in the Security Council last month, which we acknowledge. We should like also to commend the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins of Angola, for his comprehensive presentation. A word of acknowledgment also goes to the Peacebuilding Support Office for assisting the Peacebuilding Commission in its deliberations.

As more than a year has elapsed since the 2005 Summit decision that created the new Commission, and six months since the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission was set up, it is a propitious time for the General Assembly to assess the work done thus far and to prepare for the next steps. It is also appropriate that at this early stage, in reviewing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the General Assembly seek the views of the membership.

This exercise might contribute interesting insights concerning the new organ and ways to improve its performance in the light of its particular situation vis-a-vis the main bodies of the United Nations system. The General Assembly, as the democratic forum par excellence of the United Nations, is the most authoritative body to undertake a comprehensive debate on the work of the Commission.

For over a decade — since before the 2004 proposal of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission — Brazil had been advocating a mechanism that would provide for a solid link between peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development. After carefully considering the issue, we continue to hold the view that those activities are not consecutive stages in a process; rather, they embrace a set of complementary actions that are required in order to help lay down a basis on which a country in conflict, or one emerging therefrom, can build a lasting peace and a fair and viable society.

Member States, especially those in post-conflict situations, have continued to have high expectations for the launching of the Peacebuilding Commission. The new body has been created to serve as a powerful instrument to assist in the transition from conflict to sustained peace. However, even at the initial stage, the Commission has very little to show, a situation that, if not reversed, does not bode well for subsequent phases.

Strenuous negotiations led to the birth, during the 2005 Summit, of this new member of the United Nations family. The built-in imbalance in the composition of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission generated much acrimony and can be faulted for the shaky beginning. We believe that more focused attention must be paid to the principle of equitable regional representation as a way to ensure the democratic governance of the Peacebuilding Commission and genuine participation.

We should be mindful that the Peacebuilding Commission is a novel creation in this House. It is a product of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and has close links with the Economic and Social Council. It is accountable to the whole membership through the General Assembly.

On many occasions in the Organizational Committee we have expressed our concern that the new body has a long way to go before it can produce the expected results. It has not completed the drafting of its working methods, which, to a large extent, can account for the hesitant beginning of the Commission's operation. Little attention has been given to the drafting of the rules of procedure, which, in turn, has led to long debates on issues of little or no relevance.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a very important organ of the United Nations and, as such, should be supported by the General Assembly. For many countries suffering from the scourge of internecine conflict, the Commission could be a venue for mustering much-needed international cooperation to enable them to recover as early as possible from the problems engendered by political instability and lack of security.

We take satisfaction from the fact that two sister African countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone, have been selected for country-specific meetings. Brazil supports all efforts in the Commission to reach successful results in those meetings, which will be critical for the future of that body.

My delegation believes that one of the main tasks of the Peacebuilding Commission will be to articulate short-, medium- and long-term perspectives on peacebuilding in post-conflict scenarios. It should organize itself to undertake that job head-on. To that end, it should consult the views of the countries selected in the peacebuilding process and coordinate with the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, especially with regard to engaging the many United Nations bodies and agencies and associated institutions in developing recovery strategies. Particular coordination should be maintained with the Security Council, notably in making sure that assistance in post-conflict recovery is not hampered by the early withdrawal of peacekeeping forces.

Brazil believes that the General Assembly should help the Peacebuilding Commission to gain legitimacy and authority as an advisory body in the United Nations family. The General Assembly could, for instance, address the crucial aspect of balance in the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission when indicating its members. In reviewing the Commission's work, the Assembly could issue appropriate guidance as to the involvement of the whole membership in the task of helping countries in post-conflict situations. In that way we would avoid any duplication of the

Peacebuilding Commission's work with that of the many other existing forums of donors and aid-recipient members. We also believe that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could pool their efforts to provide the Commission with sufficient authority to properly discharge its functions.

By involving a wider array of actors, the reviews and discussions undertaken in the Commission could furnish the main United Nations bodies with better-informed analysis of the possibilities for the post-conflict recovery of the countries concerned, thereby improving the quality of our decisions. We know from experience that there is no gap between peacekeeping, reconstruction and development. International cooperation efforts should address all of those aspects, for it is hard to imagine that one could be secured on a lasting basis without the others.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): At the outset, I would like to welcome this opportunity to participate in this special meeting of General Assembly devoted to the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. Iceland, as a member of the European Economic Area but not a member of the European Union, aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union during the open debate in the Security Council on this subject on 31 January (see S/PV.5627). I will therefore refrain from repeating myself and will just highlight a few points.

The Government of Iceland attaches great importance to the Peacebuilding Commission. Iceland underlined its support with a contribution of $1 million to the Peacebuilding Fund. It did so in a spirit of the collective responsibility of all United Nations Member States for strengthening the peacebuilding architecture, as the President of the General Assembly stated in her statement this morning. I would also like to take this opportunity to echo what Ambassador Wolfe of Jamaica said on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement this morning regarding the fact that the disbursement of financial and other support must be accompanied by swift action.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, is a key achievement of the United Nations reform process and should be developed to become the centrepiece of United Nations efforts to help to strengthen post-conflict countries.

The need to do better is obvious, as my Norwegian colleague said in his statement this morning. To achieve that, we must ensure that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is both flexible and results-oriented, focusing on country-specific situations. We believe that the approach of the Peacebuilding Commission should be comprehensive, with a strong focus on concrete recommendations for action on the ground. Respect for human rights is a fundamental and integral aspect of that approach. There is also a need to ensure the necessary follow-up and practical implementation of its recommendations in a systematic manner through regular review meetings.

We note the progress achieved during the first seven months of the Peacebuilding Commission in assisting the first countries under consideration: Burundi and Sierra Leone. In this context, our gratitude goes to the Chairmen of the two country-specific meetings, Ambassador Frank Majoor for Sierra Leone and Ambassador Johan Løvald for Burundi, for their important input and reports earlier in the debate. I also thank the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, my colleague from Angola.

The Peacebuilding Commission must now build on this work in the months ahead to develop its strategic goals and rules of procedure, as well as strengthen its cooperation and consultations with all relevant actors. We underline the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office in this process. As many speakers have pointed out, there is a need to develop further the working relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. In this context, we must focus on effectiveness and complementarity and strive to avoid any duplication of efforts. We look forward to further discussions to that end, and, as the President of the Economic and Social Council stated earlier this morning, we are already encouraged by the emerging consensus on the fact that interaction between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council enhances the effective functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Commission has an ambitious agenda to fulfil. Its success and effectiveness will ultimately depend on the full involvement and commitment of the countries concerned, Member States, United Nations bodies on the ground and, not least, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Allow me to join others by thanking President Al-Khalifa for having convened this very important meeting. The issues before us are of profound importance. My delegation is hopeful that our deliberations will lead to the enhancing of our collective support for the Peacebuilding Commission in the exercise of its crucial mandate.

Indonesia associates itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Before the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, there was an acute need for a single forum that could facilitate effective interplay between the relevant international and national actors on how best to address the requirements of post-conflict situations and to prevent the States concerned from relapsing into conflict. That critical gap in the international support system was highlighted by our leaders when they called for the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission at the 2005 World Summit.

The Commission is still in the teething stage, but expectations of it are high. It is therefore our common responsibility to nurture the Commission and to ensure that full support is extended by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

We believe that, rather than judging the performance of the Commission at this stage, we need to devise some practical ways through which the Commission can be supported further in performing its tasks. The General Assembly and the Security Council will have an opportunity comprehensively to assess the work of the Commission when its report is presented.

For the Peacebuilding Commission to be effective, its work should translate into meaningful and beneficial actions for the peoples concerned. One of the fundamental requirements of the Commission is that it play a central role, through its recommendations on the coordination of the relevant international and national entities, in leveraging their comparative advantages. A truly inclusive and coordinated approach will systematically synergize peacebuilding efforts at both the national and international levels.

Coordination between the pertinent institutions, including United Nations bodies, needs to be enhanced. It has been our experience that at times, this has not been done in a systematic way, with the involvement of all related parties and a requisite commitment on their part to follow through.

In that regard, we should like to underline that in its coordination activities, the Commission should neither create further complexity in existing processes nor lead to any micromanaging of the activities being carried out in the countries concerned. The priorities set in the post-conflict recovery phase should be established by the national Governments under consideration. National ownership is paramount.

A coherent, organized yet flexible international support mechanism, through the Commission, would facilitate better access and response for countries in need, with improved results.

The other core function of the Commission is to marshal resources for post-conflict requirements. The role of the Commission in bringing together, and eliciting support from, the pertinent international and national entities in that regard becomes even more important when the countries in conflict are no longer making international headlines. The backing of the global community in that connection is very important.

It is also very important that the international community work with the national authorities in post-conflict countries, with particular attention to assisting them in building institutional capacity in their priority sectors. The focus should be on developing a sustainable economic model and a lasting peace.

Considering the multidimensional nature of conflicts, it is imperative that the Commission take a comprehensive approach when proposing integrated peacebuilding strategies.

In that context, the Economic and Social Council has an important role to play, particularly through the technical capabilities of its various functional and regional commissions and other subsidiary bodies. There needs to be regular interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Economic and Social Council, in the context of which relevant lessons learned and best practices can be shared.

The Economic and Social Council may wish to take up the topic of post-conflict recovery as its theme at the annual ministerial reviews in the future. We believe that our common goal should be to mobilize the entire institutional machinery of the United Nations to promote an across-the-board approach that addresses the difficult issues inherent in post-conflict situations.

The positive role of the relevant stakeholders is crucial to a successful transition from the post-conflict phase to the normal process of sustainable development. Civil society and non-governmental organization (NGOs), including women's organizations, should also play a constructive role in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The last two country meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone have been more action-oriented. We note that the work plans for both countries have recently been presented for consideration. Along with the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies, with the full involvement of the respective Governments of Burundi and of Sierra Leone, it is critical that the Commission also monitor progress on other key elements contained in the Chairs' summaries of the country meetings, such as the disbursement of funding envelopes. There need to be more frequent meetings of the Commission, in a structured manner.

We regard the work of both the Organizational Committee and country-specific configurations as seminal. Success in one will aid the other. It is incumbent upon us to support both. However, the Organizational Committee has a broader purview. A properly empowered and robust Committee will serve to strengthen the work of the Commission as a whole. There also needs to be a closer working relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we stand ready to shoulder our responsibility to contribute to ensuring more concrete and practical outcomes of the Commission's work.

Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia): At the outset, let me say that peacebuilding is a multidimensional, cross-cutting and multilayered process. I would therefore like to thank Ms. Al-Khalifa for having convened this meeting of the General Assembly as well as the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement that encouraged the holding of this debate.

The General Assembly, as the only principal organ of the United Nations with universal membership, is the place to discuss the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in carrying out its mandate. In this context, drawing on the in-depth experience of the full membership of the General Assembly is of crucial importance.

I would also like to say that Croatia aligns itself with the statement by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union.

Croatia has been elected to the Peacebuilding Commission from among those countries that have considerable peacekeeping and peacebuilding experience, in particular on the beneficiary side. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to speak again about several issues that I have already referred to in other United Nations forums.

It is important always to bear in mind that the Peacebuilding Commission has been established, by both General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, in order to fill a peacebuilding gap in the United Nations system. Croatia has strongly supported that effort; in our view, improvements in that respect are much needed. For the first time, the United Nations has a mechanism for ensuring that countries emerging from conflict have a better chance of achieving sustainable peace. In this regard, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is truly historic.

In order for the peacebuilding process to be successful and effective, there must be a national consensus and a political commitment on the part of the Government in question. However, there should also be sustainable international support for its effort. Working together, the Government and the international community need to create an environment conducive to democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. The involvement of the General Assembly, with its constant focus on these issues, is of the utmost importance.

The international community also needs to empower the Government in question so that it can establish, operationalize and carry out a sustainable development strategy. Such a strategy should include not only short-term development goals, but also long-term ones, such as education for all, access to health and social services and ensuring a gender-equality perspective. The Government must also take full responsibility for the strategy and its implementation.

At the same time, all international programmes must be fully coordinated and aligned with the strategy, including those of bilateral donors.

The Peacebuilding Commission must ensure that this international and national link is established and that it is strong and coordinated. It is therefore important to work further on the consolidation and fleshing out of its practices. We must learn by doing. We must establish working methods that we deem pragmatic and necessary. We should not become encumbered by heavy rules and restrictions. Our work must be modelled according to what is best for achieving good results on the ground in each and every case. This means that we must remain focused on the situation in countries that are currently on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Peacebuilding Commission is required to submit a report to the General Assembly later this year. At that point, we should all take into account that the Peacebuilding Commission will have been in existence for only one year. It is a body that has been established to promote new practices in the work of the United Nations. We believe that, ultimately, the value-added role of the Peacebuilding Commission will be measured by its impact on the ground. Croatia, as a Commission member, is fully prepared to contribute to achieving the best possible results.

Mr. Sorcar (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for having convened this very timely meeting on the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are confident that deliberations at this meeting will provide important and valuable input and guidance for addressing the outstanding organizational and substantive issues pertaining to the Peacebuilding Commission and will thereby facilitate the effective fulfilment of its mandated responsibilities.

Bangladesh associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus of the Peacebuilding Commission. In addition, we would like to highlight a number of points.

The Peacebuilding Commission, as we are all aware, has been set up to address an institutional lacuna in the United Nations structure. We are heartened by the step-by-step institutionalization of the process of peacebuilding through the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office and, most recently, the launching of the Peacebuilding Fund. Those three bodies, with the Peacebuilding Commission in the centre, must work in tandem to achieve institutional harmony. We should take care not to get entangled in jurisdictional or procedural overstepping. The Peacebuilding Commission should concentrate on such measures as marshalling critical actors to assist national authorities in immediate post-relief recovery efforts so as to pave the way for medium- to long-term reconstruction. The Organizational Committee should be at the helm of all peacebuilding activities and take stock of input from all relevant agencies. In this context, the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office will be critical. It should be the link between the Secretary-General and the Commission. The Office should be a repository of wisdom, knowledge and best practices.

Post-conflict societies must take charge of their own destiny — this is the issue of national ownership. As our post-liberation experience in Bangladesh shows, it took decades of steady nation-building efforts to bring us to the level of macroeconomic stability that we have today. It was achieved through domestic initiatives, including home-grown ideas like microcredit and women's non-formal education, combined with external material support. In the same vein, it is the responsibility of the national Governments of post-conflict countries to set out their respective national priorities and guide United Nations peacebuilding efforts properly and to their fullest benefit. In this context, the sharing of experiences might prove useful in furthering sustainable peace.

It is imperative to build pluralist political institutions to provide a propitious societal framework in which peacebuilding activities can take place and flourish. Furthermore, the root causes of conflict should be identified and appropriate remedial measures adopted. The restoration of an environment of mutual trust, confidence and tolerance through the repair and transformation of damaged relationships is the key to the cessation of hostilities. This entails a process of societal reconciliation and healing to alleviate the trauma of the victims. Justice and the rule of law need to gain ground so as to create a social base where human rights are respected. The whole of the Government machinery, and particularly the part that plays a direct role in creating conditions for peace, must be overhauled and put back to work. A system of accountability needs to be established leading to a

process of democratization. Initiatives at the microeconomic and macroeconomic levels must be shored up to build the infrastructure necessary to provide a platform for the launching of broad economic activities.

Throughout the peacebuilding process, it will be important to create peace constituencies. Middle-range actors such as teachers, lawyers and religious leaders can often function as links between the grass roots and higher levels. It is also expected that the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, together with the international financial and other organizations, will be the most critical peacebuilding agents.

Since peacebuilding is an all-encompassing exercise, Government efforts only will not suffice. Sincere and unqualified support will be required from the private sector, civil society, development partners and all other stakeholders, external and domestic. In our own experience, civil society can provide vital support for the public authorities. In Bangladesh, non-governmental organizations in particular play a significant role in society. But there are many others that have contributed to society as well. The sharing of best practices — an exercise successfully replicated in many parts of the world — can lend a big hand in peacebuilding endeavours.

The Peacebuilding Commission has just started its journey. The work done so far by the Commission on Sierra Leone and Burundi is noteworthy. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Chairmen of the country-specific meetings deserve to be applauded. We commend the Governments of Sierra Leone and of Burundi for their cooperation. We are thankful to the General Assembly and to the Security Council for their interest in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

However, this should not lead to complacency. This is only the beginning, and there remains considerable scope for improvement. We are of the view that inter-agency relations should be further strengthened and that the Organizational Committee should infuse more dynamism into peacebuilding activities by playing a more proactive and lead role. Furthermore, the Peacebuilding Commission should be untiring in its self-evaluation and stocktaking. For the Commission, it is the beginning of a long journey, with many post-conflict societies waiting for assistance.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): Sweden aligns itself fully with the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity, some of them based on observations gleaned from our participation in the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission constitutes one of the major reform achievements of the 2005 Summit, and we need to follow up on its progress. This debate provides an opportunity to make some preliminary assessments of initial experiences and provide guidance for our future work. The issue of peacebuilding will be from now on a standing feature on our agenda, and we look forward to participating actively in the annual debates in the General Assembly, as envisioned in the founding resolution.

We participated in the initial two meetings of the Sierra Leone configuration in October and in December. Those first substantive discussions form a good basis for the future engagement of the Commission in Sierra Leone. It has identified a set of challenges and gaps, based on input from the Government of Sierra Leone. It has also started to monitor progress and make recommendations.

Sweden believes that in the next phase, the level of engagement and commitment by the Commission should become more concrete and action-oriented, based on an interactive and frank exchange of views. In order to achieve this, it is vital to ensure that meetings are thoroughly prepared. This should be done through an inclusive process, involving all relevant stakeholders, also at the field level.

The Commission should help achieve a higher level of coordination and burden-sharing among actors in Sierra Leone, focusing on efforts directly related to peacebuilding. The Commission should also become a forum for open dialogue between the Government and the other participants, so as to make clear what is expected by the various actors and to follow through on the goals that have been set.

A mapping exercise of ongoing activities within the priority areas is needed in order for participants to be able to contribute more effectively. We therefore appreciate the Chairman's intention to elaborate a concrete work plan on measures to be taken by the Government of Sierra Leone and the international

community. That is an important step towards further strengthening the link between the Commission and activities in the field.

We also welcome the fact that the Peacebuilding Support Office is now more or less fully staffed and that, with increased capacity, the Office should be in a better position to prepare and follow up the meetings of the Commission.

At a more general level, it is evident to us that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council all have vital and complementary roles to play in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In order to avoid overlap and inefficiencies, we would strongly encourage enhanced coordination among those bodies.

We also need to fully involve the international financial institutions in our work. Those institutions have an essential role to play in peacebuilding efforts, including in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission. Furthermore, non-governmental organization (NGOs) have an important role, not least in ensuring local ownership of the peacebuilding strategies. NGOs should be part of our common efforts in the framework of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Within the United Nations, concerted efforts under the leadership of the Peacebuilding Support Office should ensure coherence and coordination of activities. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme all have special responsibilities in that regard.

The Peacebuilding Fund is an important component of that architecture. We support the use of the Fund in Sierra Leone and Burundi and would encourage the Secretary-General to consider using its resources in other countries emerging from conflict, in accordance with the Fund's mandate. We would also like to re-emphasize the Fund's catalytic role and the fact that its role is to support key activities for peacebuilding. It is important to keep in mind that the Fund was never intended to become the main vehicle for financial support to any country in a given situation. In addition to contributing substantially to the Fund, Sweden, for its part, will also increase its funding to peacebuilding activities within the framework of United Nations funds and programmes. We urge other Member States to come forward with voluntary contributions to the Fund.

We understand fully the initial need for the Commission not to strain its limited capacity and to gain experience. While it may still be too early to increase the number of countries on its agenda, it is essential that relatively soon we consider addressing, in the Peacebuilding Commission, other post-conflict situations. In our view, the Commission's greatest added value lies in the initial stages of post-conflict.

The ultimate goal of the Commission is to lower the rate of recurrence of conflict. In order to reach that goal, it is time to intensify the concrete action taken in the Peacebuilding Commission framework. But in doing so, we must also show a long-term commitment in order to achieve progress that will meet coming challenges in specific countries.

The primary responsibility for peacebuilding lies with the countries on the Commission's agenda themselves. But the Commission and its participants must be ready to lend assistance, in a spirit of partnership. Sweden is committed to doing its share.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): We welcome today's plenary meeting today to discuss the implementation of resolution 60/180 operationalizing the Peacebuilding Commission. Our deliberations on the challenges and opportunities confronting the Commission will no doubt help to clarify the issues facing the Commission in the fulfilment of its tasks.

At the outset, my delegation would like to compliment Jamaica for its effective contribution to evolving a common position within the Non-Aligned Movement on peacebuilding issues, and also to associate ourselves fully with the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Our statement, accordingly, will be complementary to the content of the Non-Aligned Movement's statement, emphasizing some aspects that, in our view, are essential to retaining an undiminished focus on post-conflict recovery efforts and to sustain the credibility of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Representative of Angola for his stewardship of the Peacebuilding Commission as well as the Permanent Representatives of Norway and of the Netherlands for their leadership in the country-specific configurations of the Commission. We also

appreciate El Salvador's chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned.

In discussing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, it is important to recall its main purposes, as stated in paragraph 2 of resolution 60/180. The three main purposes emphasize the imperative of bringing together all relevant actors to marshal resources; supporting institution-building efforts and the development of integrated strategies for sustainable development; and ensuring predictable financing for early recovery activities. We re-emphasize the continued relevance of those objectives to the work of the Commission.

Those main purposes constitute the core of the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission, whose repository of authority remains the Organizational Committee. We consider that certain specific elements of those main purposes relate directly to the Commission's various formats, in particular the country-specific configurations. This is especially the case given that the country-specific configurations are intended to bring together relevant actors and development partners to assist in recovery efforts. While this distinction will continue to be appreciated, we seek to preserve the integrity and the primacy of the Organizational Committee in its overall authority and functions.

We also need to appreciate that the wording of paragraph 2 of the General Assembly resolution implies that there are other purposes which could also help drive the Commission in its work. This arises from the reality that no two post-conflict peacebuilding situations are alike, and, likewise, the challenges and opportunities presented by each of them are unique. It is therefore left to our creative minds to interpret the resolution and to help empower the Commission to approach the specificities of each peacebuilding situation with particular emphasis and attention, and, indeed, to find the adequate resources that each situation deserves. It is in this context that we wish to stress that paragraph 2 should be approached in the context of the preambular part of the resolution, which provides certain specific indicators and objectives. For instance, some situations may require more of an economic development focus than a conflict resolution orientation in their transformation from recovery to sustainable peace.

The affirmation of the primary responsibility of national Governments in identifying their priorities and strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding is an essential condition in this context. The need to enhance coordination among other organs of the United Nations, as defined in the Charter, remains another parameter. This makes clear that the purview of the Peacebuilding Commission is broad enough to enable it to consider various situations at different levels. The Peacebuilding Commission could focus on issues of concern to national authorities on the basis of both the main purposes and the other purposes inherent in the resolution.

In this context, we re-emphasize national ownership of the peacebuilding process as a key principle underpinning the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission. The principle of national ownership should be the basis on which the work of the Commission should be undertaken and on which it should be supported by the international community. In our view, this makes it essential to secure the consent of the national authorities concerned when taking decisions with regard to all matters relating to the work of the Commission.

The composition of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission has been devised in an innovative manner, bringing together five categories of primary actors. In addition to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, this includes five top contributors to the United Nations budget and five top troop providers. In the view of my delegation, this mosaic of different actors and organs is a unique feature of the Peacebuilding Commission and enhances its values of inclusiveness and legitimacy. This feature will, no doubt, add strength and balance to the work of the United Nations in its peacebuilding efforts and must be nurtured in such a manner as to ensure that no competitive relationship emerges among the stakeholders in the Peacebuilding Commission representing various categories and organs of the United Nations.

The secretariat of the Peacebuilding Commission — the Peacebuilding Support Office — is new, and we recognize that it has a daunting task ahead of it as it is working, by and large, in uncharted territory, which requires continuous adaptation, especially at a time when the United Nations system is beset with resource constraints, both financial and

human. Nevertheless, the secretariat's contribution to making the Commission work is crucial to its success. In this context, while thanking the Peacebuilding Support Office staff for its contribution so far, my delegation expects that the procedures and methodology adopted by the secretariat in conducting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will continue to improve and that more efficient, transparent and practical working methods will evolve as we continue to embark on our tasks.

The Peacebuilding Commission has been in operation for a little over six months now. It is one of the youngest organizations within the United Nations — and it is a unique organization. It needs to establish itself as a practical, credible organization capable of living up to the expectations of the international community. To ensure that it does so, collective efforts will be required on the part of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Secretariat of the United Nations.

As a responsible Member State, Sri Lanka will strive hard, along with others, to ensure that the Peacebuilding Commission moves in the right direction and fulfils its intended objectives. We cannot afford to let this new organ of the United Nations fail.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would like to add my voice to those who have thanked the President of the General Assembly for having organized this very important debate.

Now that the Peacebuilding Commission has been established for seven months, it is appropriate that we in its joint parent bodies take stock. Last week's Security Council debate (see S/PV.5627) was a helpful initiative in this respect, and today's debate will contribute the very valuable perspective of the General Assembly.

We are optimistic about the value that the Peacebuilding Commission can add. It is a new body, still feeling its way. But we believe that the Commission membership is committed to practical steps to improve peacebuilding, and we will work in that direction within the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in mutually reinforcing ways.

The Peacebuilding Commission was created because there was a gap. Countries emerging from conflict had no natural home at the United Nations, and several slipped back into conflict when international attention was diverted elsewhere. This has cost too many lives. The Peacebuilding Commission ensures that countries emerging from conflict remain on our agenda, that they benefit from the respective scrutiny of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and that, for a specific situation, the national Government, troop-contributing countries, donors, the international financial institutions and other actors can work together within a coordinated set of priorities covering security, social, economic and rule-of-law issues.

I would like to align myself with the statement that was made this morning by my colleague from Germany, which holds the presidency of the European Union. I would like now to highlight some core elements of the Peacebuilding Commission's work which the United Kingdom believes we should focus on in the coming months. We all share the goal that, by the time of the Peacebuilding Commission's first anniversary, we want to be proud of the positive impact that this new body is having on the ground.

First, we believe that the core mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission is its country-specific work with strong national leadership. When the Peacebuilding Commission reviews a country, we believe that there are six fundamental things that it should do. First, it should look comprehensively at peacebuilding to identify the most pressing priorities and make recommendations covering governance, human rights and aid, as well as peace and security. Secondly, it should involve a wide range of actors, including civil society and the private sector, with the goal of agreeing on a common vision of how to build peace and promote the exchange of information and coordination. Thirdly, it should provide scrutiny and honest assessments of progress and problems. Fourthly, it should, through frank dialogue with the Government concerned, provide recommendations for action to be followed up by the Security Council, international financial institutions, United Nations agencies and other partners. Fifthly, it should ensure follow-up to those recommendations through regular progress reviews. The General Assembly has a particular role to play in that respect. Sixth, it should ensure that lessons learned are compiled and disseminated.

Within that framework, and building on the foundation of the establishing resolutions, the United Kingdom believes that there are two key areas where

the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission can develop an effective working relationship.

The first area is the oversight role of the General Assembly: providing a strategic review of the Peacebuilding Commission's work. The founding Assembly resolution for the Commission states that it should submit an annual report to the Assembly and that there should be an annual debate to review that report. We must ensure that such debates are rich and interactive so that the full United Nations membership has an opportunity to contribute to the Commission's work.

Secondly, for countries on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict that are not on the agenda of the Security Council, the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council can use the Peacebuilding Commission for advice. In such situations, the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly will wish to discuss the best manner in which to proceed with the work, together with the Chair of the Commission. To help cement that working relationship, the President of the General Assembly, together with the President of the Security Council, might meet with the Chairs of the Commission to discuss ongoing or upcoming work and the reporting cycle of the Commission.

As the United Kingdom stated in the Security Council last week, there is no exclusivity in the relationship among the Peacebuilding Commission, its parent bodies and the Economic and Social Council. We look forward to discussion of the Commission's work with all United Nations organs. All are equally valid, and all have their discrete and respective roles to play.

I cannot mention the development of the Peacebuilding Commission's work without mentioning the Peacebuilding Support Office. Here, let me thank the Assistant Secretary-General for all her efforts so far in bringing the Office to life. We see the Peacebuilding Support Office as having three crucial roles: first, as a secretariat to the Commission; secondly, to support the United Nations country teams in their work with the Commission; and thirdly, to be a repository for relevant lessons learned produced by various components of the United Nations system.

I said at the start of my statement that by the time of the Peacebuilding Commission's first anniversary, it should be making an impact on the ground. In essence, that means that the peacebuilding priorities identified by the Commission are being implemented in Sierra Leone and Burundi and that the United Nations and international actors are more joined up in support of those priorities.

To underpin that work, by July the Peacebuilding Commission should have agreed on an annual calendar of meetings; there should be well-established in-country consultation mechanisms, with national Governments taking the leading role and bringing together all partners; and the Peacebuilding Support Office should be working at full strength.

It is our belief that, with the help of colleagues on the Peacebuilding Commission, we shall reach these goals.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the President of the General Assembly for having organized the debate that brings us together today. The statements of previous speakers have clearly shown not only the stakes involved in ensuring that the mission of the Peacebuilding Commission succeeds, but also all the challenges that it must still take up to accomplish that. From that perspective, it is good that the General Assembly is devoting particular attention to the work of this new organ, whose achievements and progress it will assess each year.

While we fully support the statement made by the presidency of the European Union and the ideas just expressed by my British colleague, I should like to refer to a number of particular aspects of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The added value of the Peacebuilding Commission lies in its capacity to intervene in problems specific to the peacebuilding process in a focused way by methodically attacking the most urgent challenges. Participation in the Commission's work by all relevant actors on the ground is essential in that respect. I am thinking in particular not only of the States of the region, but of institutional donors. By making it possible to identify the objectives and priorities shared by all parties involved and to coordinate their actions according to a timetable that is both long-term and adjusted to immediate priorities, the Peacebuilding Commission can become an essential tool for anchoring countries emerging from crisis in peace and sustainable development.

Together with the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Peacebuilding Fund, which is designed to act as a catalyst, is an important tool for ensuring that the Commission's activities will be focused on immediate priorities and will fill gaps and yield concrete results. It is in that context that we wish to announce today the intention of the French Government to contribute €1 million to the Fund.

In addition to the projects financed by the Peacebuilding Fund, the work of the Commission should lead to better allocation of resources and increased involvement by all actors, beginning with the authorities of the countries concerned. They must, of course, be closely involved in preparing and carrying out the Commission's work. In that regard, I wish to pay tribute to the work being done by the authorities of Burundi and Sierra Leone in coordination with the United Nations and other actors.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that it is essential that we be able, collectively and in the near future, to achieve tangible results, focused on the countries under consideration. It is by that measure that the Assembly should in due course assess and appreciate the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Ms. Intone (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the German presidency of the European Union.

Finland sees the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process. The new United Nations peacebuilding architecture reflects a renewed commitment by the international community to more sustained engagement in countries emerging from conflict.

We very much appreciate the fact that the Peacebuilding Commission is working towards an integrated approach to peacebuilding, taking into account the links among security and development, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. With that conviction, Finland has also contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund in order to support the Commission's country-level work. We strongly encourage the international community to ensure an adequate level of external assistance for both Sierra Leone and Burundi, and we welcome the efforts to broaden the donor base for both countries.

The Commission has been able to move from procedure to substance, especially in the country-specific meetings. Areas of priority action for both Sierra Leone and Burundi have been defined. Those recommendations now have to be implemented in the most efficient way in the countries concerned. In that regard, it is also important that we aim to strengthen the common perception of peacebuilding elements.

The implementation of the recommendations of the Commission is a challenging task. Sustainable peacebuilding in both Sierra Leone and Burundi requires efforts across a broad spectrum of political commitments, security and governance reforms, development investments, and response to the immediate needs of the population. Respecting the priorities identified by the host country's own poverty-reduction strategies and other development plans will help ensure the sustainability of the peacebuilding efforts.

It is very important that civil society and non-governmental organizations, including women's and youth organizations and the private sector, also be fully incorporated within the work of the Peacebuilding Commission at the country level. Finland very much encourages the Commission also to involve the most vulnerable groups, as well as minorities, in the process of developing priority strategies and programmes.

Special attention should be given in the peacebuilding processes to questions of transitional justice and the development of the rule of law. Post-conflict situations require comprehensive long-term strategies for re-establishing and reforming rule-of-law institutions. At the same time, the rights and needs of victims of past human rights abuses should be taken into account, as should the needs and interests of civil society at large.

The Peacebuilding Commission should be a major tool for improving coordination among the United Nations bodies dealing with peacebuilding, recovery and development. The Commission needs to ensure effective coordination and coherence with relevant international organizations and other stakeholders.

When creating new instruments like the Peacebuilding Commission, it is of high importance that all main bodies of the United Nations system participate in reviewing the work done and progress achieved. In addition to open discussions in the

General Assembly, as well as in the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, chairpersons of the Commission may want to consider regular consultations with the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

The role of the Peacebuilding Support Office still needs to be strengthened. We are happy to learn that the delays concerning staff recruitment have now been resolved. Finland feels that, in due time, the Support Office could become a real strategic and innovative resource of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Finally, Finland very much encourages the Peacebuilding Commission to work in the most flexible and transparent way. An effective exchange-of-information mechanism is needed, as are special review meetings. We think that it would be very useful for the Commission to organize hearings about the progress of its work open to all United Nations Member States.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

Recently, the strengthening of the Peacebuilding Commission has become a general concern of all States in the context of the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. The Commission is the repository of the high expectations of post-conflict States and peoples in their search for stability and development. It also embodies the firm resolve of the international community to forge lasting peace and common prosperity and to build a harmonious world through multilateral cooperation. It is indeed timely that the Security Council and the General Assembly have held meetings to take stock of the Commission's work and to engage in frank and in-depth exchanges of views on the way forward.

The subjects of the Commission's tasks are the countries newly emerged from conflict, and especially the people of those countries, who are desperate for peace and stability. Their agreement and satisfaction should be the benchmarks against which the Commission's work is judged, as they are ultimately the designated beneficiaries and should be the final arbiters of the Commission's work.

One of the Commission's principal functions is to provide advisers to post-conflict States and to help them to prepare integrated strategies. Only by understanding the specific situations of the countries concerned and by ensuring their ownership of their own peacebuilding endeavours can the Commission prepare a pragmatic and viable strategy to ensure that its efforts are well targeted and tailored to the needs of the countries in question.

Country-specific meetings should be a priority of the next phase of the Commission's work. Ensuring high efficiency, setting clear priorities and taking action-oriented approaches should be the guiding principles of the work undertaken at those meetings. We should focus our energies on concrete questions rather than engage in lengthy debates on conceptual problems. In the interests of efficacy and effectiveness, our work needs constant improvement and adaptation in light of the specific situations of the targeted States. There is no need to re-open agreed priorities for discussion, and our interest in long-term macro-economic issues should not blur our focus on more urgent and specific questions.

The Commission should first ensure its success in Burundi and Sierra Leone. The concerns of those countries regarding the payment procedures for the Peacebuilding Fund must be adequately addressed.

Peacebuilding is a process that requires coordination among various actors. The strengthening of the Commission's role in integrating coordination so as to maximize the respective roles of all parties concerned is the key to the success of our peacebuilding efforts. The Commission must establish channels of communication with all interested parties and actors, while the parties must coordinate among themselves and complement each other's work.

The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should, from their respective vantage points, provide active support and input to the Commission. The Commission's structure should be duly strengthened. Its Organizational Committee can base its work on the founding resolutions of the General Assembly, and the Security Council can play an important role in that regard. The Peacebuilding Support Office should also provide assurances and support to the Commission.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was the result of the common efforts of all Member States. It is our shared responsibility to ensure its continued growth. To that end, we must demonstrate

the will to cooperate with each other and to take substantive action. We hope that, through our common efforts, we will ensure the Commission's success.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today's debate on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission is most timely. The establishment of the Commission represents one of the most concrete and important achievements of the current reform process of the Organization. The creation of the new peacebuilding architecture — the Commission, its Support Office and the voluntary Fund — was a direct response to the need for an institutional mechanism within the United Nations system devoted to the requirements of countries emerging from conflict.

Allow me to touch on a few points of relevance to my delegation.

The first is the close link that exists between security and development. The *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme tells us that, of the 32 countries occupying the lowest levels of human development in the world, 22 have experienced conflict at some point since 1990. Of the 52 countries where infant mortality figures have remained level or worsened, 30 have experienced conflict since 1990. That data should not be left out of our debate.

Unless the vicious cycle of poverty and conflict is broken, the destructive impact of civil wars will continue to spill over national borders, spreading all too easily into neighbouring countries and undermining regional peace and stability. With that reality in mind, we must define strategies to reintegrate former combatants in countries emerging from conflict and identify solutions to unemployment among young people, who often fall easy prey to recruitment into armed groups. There is a clear complementarity between job-creation policies and improved security conditions in countries that have been devastated by conflict.

A second point is the need to achieve in countries emerging from conflict a general sense of ownership in the reconstruction process. As former Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted at the inaugural session of the Peacebuilding Commission:

> "Peacebuilding requires national ownership, and must be homegrown. Outsiders, however well-intentioned, cannot substitute for the knowledge and will of the people of the country concerned. It is the latter who best know their own history, culture and political contexts. It is they who will live with the consequences of the decisions taken. And it is they who must feel that peacebuilding is their achievement, if it is to have any hope of lasting." (*SG/SM/10533*)

While it is true that peacebuilding is a collective effort that must involve the international community, it falls to the Governments of the countries concerned to assume the main responsibility for setting priorities and ensuring the sustainability of the peace process. If countries emerging from conflict do not assume ownership of the process, the Commission could be viewed as an institution that imposes solutions and does not consider national priorities.

A third element to be stressed is that the Commission cannot be perceived as an exclusive organ of donors. As resolution 60/180 notes, one of the main purposes of the Commission is to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. It is therefore not a forum that limits participation to donors and beneficiary countries under the supervision of the United Nations.

The Commission must enjoy the participation of all relevant actors in the peacebuilding process. In other words, the Commission should not create a donor-beneficiary culture. The contributions of donors are no doubt very important in defining and implementing a country's reconstruction strategies, but that does not mean that donor countries control or condition the Commission's work. All members must participate in and influence decisions relating to the disbursement of resources. The main troop contributors can also give direction to strategies for the mobilization of resources, since they work in the field and, because they have day-to-day experience on the ground, understand the needs of the State and the population.

A fourth point that we believe must be raised in this debate and which complements those already noted is the relationship between the Commission's credibility and the fair representation of its members. As my delegation noted in the open debate in the Security Council last week, that element cannot be a secondary aspect of our deliberations.

The lack of representation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on the Peacebuilding Commission is a concrete fact that is further exacerbated in the category of major troop contributors, in which a single subregion is represented by three States, while the remaining two belong to another regional group. My delegation reiterates once again that the Commission's credibility will depend, among other things, on a fair membership that reflects the participation of countries in peace missions, experience in peacebuilding, and equitable geographical representation.

A fifth element that we wish to stress is the need to identify genuine indicators of the development of peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict. The convening of national elections is often seen as a critical turning point in peacebuilding. We do not deny its positive influence in shaping the State; while it is an important step, it is not the only step in a country's reconstruction.

As my delegation stated in the open debate of the Security Council on 31 January, a disturbing trend is emerging in the world. The great majority of countries that are able to overcome situations of war and violence in the short term soon revert to the earlier scenario, with its consequent relaunching of hostilities, the resumption of violence against the civilian population, economic and social chaos, and the dismantling of the State. We therefore need more genuine indicators permitting us to achieve a greater degree of stability in countries emerging from conflict.

We believe that the successful implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; job creation; and the participation of women could be good indicators for measuring the effectiveness of a solid reconstruction and peacebuilding strategy for a country hoping to rejoin the international community.

A sixth important element is the need to steer the Commission's work towards the field. That area may enjoy the greatest agreement among delegations. There is a general consensus that the Commission's work would be more effective if it had a direct impact on the ground. The Peacebuilding Commission cannot be an organ removed from reality. At last week's debate of the Security Council, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, Chairman of the Commission, prudently drew our attention to the fact that "our theoretical differences in New York are meaningless to those who are directly suffering from the consequences of conflict on the ground. What matters for them are concrete actions" (*S/PV.5627, p. 4*).

That is a key element for our deliberations. One of the Commission's most important functions is its work on the ground with national Governments and United Nations offices in places where the devastating consequences of conflict are being felt. The Commission must therefore harmonize its work with the specific cooperation programmes adopted by the United Nations specialized agencies so that existing mechanisms for cooperation can be supported by those that the Peacebuilding Commission may bring to the ground.

A seventh element to be stressed is the importance of the correct systematization of lessons learned. We deem it essential that the Commission, through the Working Group chaired by the Permanent Representative of El Salvador, be able to systematize all lessons learned with respect to peacebuilding and the reconstruction of countries devastated by conflict.

My delegation considers it most appropriate to include among those lessons several aspects noted so far: the close relationship between security and development; the tangible benefits of inclusive youth policies; the maintenance of assistance and support by the international community with respect to needs on the ground, beyond such partial successes as the holding of elections and the ascension of new authorities; averting the diversion of international assistance in those countries that have yet to pass through the requisite phases of reconstruction; and the multiplying effect of a peacebuilding effort perceived as owned by the population itself.

We also feel it relevant to consider in our deliberations the possibility that the Commission may take up new cases. Peacekeeping is an integral aspect of peacebuilding. We will move in the right direction only if peacekeeping operations help to create an environment favourable to peacebuilding. We could hope that the Peacebuilding Commission would gradually begin to take up new cases, particularly when the peacebuilding process begins to bear fruit. My delegation believes that Haiti could be one such case.

Uruguay is firmly committed to peacebuilding and international security, as can be seen by our position as the seventh-ranking country contributing

troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and also as the leading troop-contributing country in the world in per capita terms. Our country renews its commitment to United Nations peace missions and to peacebuilding in the world. We reiterate our intention to be part of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Miller (United States of America): It is appropriate that we meet today in the General Assembly to discuss progress achieved in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. It is important that the membership as a whole remain actively supportive of this new body, which is intended to offer advice and to coordinate peacebuilding efforts in countries emerging from conflict. The Security Council has been holding similar discussions, and members of the Peacebuilding Commission and officials in the Peacebuilding Support Office will benefit from the various perspectives offered in these complementary debates.

The Peacebuilding Commission is a work in progress, and the United States is fully committed to its efforts to assist the countries with which it is concerned. We are less concerned about how the Commission functions bureaucratically than with what it achieves. The Commission, established jointly by the General Assembly and the Security Council, is organizationally complex. This complexity can be a strength if it results in greater attention to and support for the Commission and enriches its work with a variety of experiences and influences.

We need to make sure, however, that we do not let institutional rivalries or procedural debates become an impediment to effectiveness. No one working in post-conflict situations, no citizen of a country trying to emerge from months or years of fighting, cares at all about United Nations lines of authority or the institutional breakdown of seats around a conference room table. They care, and we should care, about results.

What we all agree on is the goal of strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission's ability to improve strategies to support countries emerging from conflict, to help those societies establish the institutions and systems necessary to prevent a relapse into violence. This will be accomplished primarily through the country-specific work of the Commission, and it is on this work that we need to focus our attention and resources.

The Commission provides a forum for the various agencies, Governments and organizations involved in a particular post-conflict situation to come together to share their assessments and work plans and to better coordinate and target their respective efforts. It need not do more than this, but it needs to do this well. The strength of the Peacebuilding Commission will ultimately be measured only by the pragmatic action it inspires and the difference it makes in the lives of people in post-conflict situations.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express our thanks for convening this important meeting in response to the request from the group of non-aligned countries. My delegation associates itself with the statement by the representative of Jamaica, who spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 86th meeting.

My delegation affirms that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was one of the important decisions of the World Summit of 2005. We are indeed gratified that it has decided to start its work with two fraternal countries, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

Six months after the beginning of the work of the Commission, my delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, the Commission needs to advance swiftly beyond procedural and organizational matters, though they are important. It must concentrate on the main objectives for which it was established. Those objectives require a tremendous effort to achieve results on the ground. It is our hope that work to implement the agreed and precise mandates of the Commission will be swift and efficient.

Secondly, the General Assembly, with its inclusive membership and its more democratic character, is the best forum in which to follow the Commission's work. That can be done through periodic and annual reports. There is also a need to pay attention to the links between the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, in view of the substantive links between the work of those two bodies in the economic, social and developmental fields, as well as in gender equality, children and youth, and the increased participation of women.

Thirdly, it is of vital importance that the Commission deal with the roots of the problems in countries emerging from conflict in order to avert

relapse into conflict. That must include consideration of the root economic, social, cultural and ethnic causes, as well as of the role of external intervention and the weakness and frailty of the infrastructure. The recommendations of the Commission must be consistent with and complementary to national solutions that must be given them priority. The Commission must also adopt the agreed domestic decisions and options in the reform plans.

Fourthly, priority must be accorded to lessons learned through the experiences of other countries in post-conflict situations. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the efforts of El Salvador as Chair of the working group on lessons learned. Indeed, every conflict has its own characteristics; every country has its own specificities. However, there are some general features, such as those pertaining to the reform of various sectors, the reintegration of former combatants, disarmament and demining.

Fifthly, we wish to stress the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund and the need to enhance it. The Commission must work harmoniously and must not distinguish between the role of the donor countries and its other members. Special importance must be given to creating integrated strategies and reform and coordination programmes for peacebuilding.

Sixth, the Organizational Committee is the steering committee. The Peacebuilding Support Office is one part of the Committee's work and must help it in the implementation of its programmes and the coordination of its efforts.

Finally, my delegation wishes the Commission every success in its work, which we hope will serve as an example of success in the vitally important field of peacebuilding, especially given the sharp increase in the costs of peacekeeping operations. The challenge before the Commission is to bridge the gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Its success will be an important incentive to other countries emerging from conflict in the future and to United Nations reform in general.

We welcome the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and look forward to the eventual creation of a United Nations peacemaking mechanism that will resolve conflicts, given the fact that the Security Council, with its undemocratic structure, has proven unable to respond to the needs and challenges of a globalizing world.

Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): It is a good omen that, following last week's debate in the Security Council, the General Assembly has in turn organized a debate to provide all Member States with an opportunity to weigh in on the important issue of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We have noted during these debates that there is a consensus concerning the role of the Commission. It goes without saying that the Peacebuilding Commission does not belong to the Security Council alone, a matter that has been noted throughout the debates. The Security Council's debate was open, since it wished everyone to have the opportunity to express their views on that issue.

It is not important to know who has precedence with respect to the organization and activities of the Commission; what is important to the peoples concerned is to know how the United Nations can help them. As one colleague noted earlier, in our countries — and in mine in particular — the United Nations is not seen through the prism of the Security Council or the General Assembly; it is the flag of the United Nations that is seen, and that flag symbolizes the Organization's activities and international solidarity. It calls on us all in our own way to contribute to the best of our abilities to our collective task.

In opening the debate this morning, the President of the General Assembly recalled the circumstances that led to the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. She also recalled the context in which the Commission must play its role and assume its responsibilities. Those responsibilities are not limited to the Commission's membership; they must be shared by all 192 Member States. That is why we have all had an opportunity here, today, to express our views on what the Commission can and must do.

Let us be reasonable, however. The Peacebuilding Commission cannot do everything and does not have answers to every problem. Indeed, that is not its role. The role it has been given is specific — to fill a gap and to ensure that countries emerging from conflict do not relapse. There should be no hiatus between ceasefire and reconstruction. Those countries and their peoples must not be forgotten. We all surely recall the children of Sierra Leone whose hands or feet were cut off. Those children cannot wait. We must ensure that

those who suffer in Burundi receive international assistance and solidarity.

The Peacebuilding Commission can be summed up in a single expression: international solidarity. Earlier, it was noted quite rightly that the Commission should not be limited to relations between donors and beneficiary countries. Each of us can contribute to the Commission. The Peacebuilding Fund is open to contributions from everyone, and I note and welcome the fact that the President of the General Assembly expressed this morning her intention to write a personal letter to every Member State, requesting it to contribute. We must tell our Governments that the Peacebuilding Commission needs money so that it can work, and work properly.

The Chairman of the Commission, our colleague from Angola, informed us of the progress that has been achieved. My delegation is satisfied by that progress. Of course, much remains to be done, but the Commission has been in existence for little more than six months. Its members have been striving to ensure that our decisions are implemented, that decisive action is taken, and that we focus on attaining concrete results. We also listened with great pleasure to the statements made by the Ambassadors of the Netherlands and Norway, informing us of the outcomes of the country-specific meetings on Burundi and Sierra Leone. In my delegation's view, those meetings bore real fruit.

I believe that it is too easy to criticize. Of course, we can and intend to do better, and I think everyone agrees that the Peacebuilding Support Office is doing outstanding work. Yesterday, we considered the plans of action, strategies and programmes before us — an entire series of activities to be undertaken. I believe that we will be satisfied when we understand all the tasks that the Commission intends to undertake. That will be possible, of course, only with support from everyone. That is essential.

It is also essential to recall that the Peacebuilding Commission is not a development agency. While that goes without saying, it is equally true that we must ensure that, with everyone's support, we will be able to fill the gap. The peoples who need international assistance must see reborn the hope that they can rebuild their countries and that there is another life possible after war, based on constructive dialogue, democracy and the rule of law. That democracy must be participatory. We must not see to it solely that elections are held in those countries, only to pack up our bags and go home in the certainty that democracy has been established and will be consolidated.

It does not work like that. Much more than that is required. Peace and the rule of law are both required for development. There can be no lasting peace, no rule of law and no democracy when stomachs are empty, when people are hungry, when people have no access to drinking water, when they cannot go to school, when girls are discriminated against. What is all of that called? That is called the combat against poverty. That is the only fight that is worth carrying out. We call on all members to lend their support in the fight against those calamities.

We are aware of the fact that is not easy to distinguish between the areas of competence of the General Assembly and of the Security Council. But I venture to hope that, with respect to the Peacebuilding Commission and the future of peoples who are suffering, the Security Council, the General Assembly and even — why not? — the Economic and Social Council will work together to ensure that the United Nations and the principles enshrined in its Charter do not just make empty promises and that concerted action is taken and substantial results are achieved, and that we can give hope to countries in need.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Peacebuilding Support Office for the useful work it has done and for having shown that, with diligence and intelligence, concrete results can be achieved. As I said earlier, I think that, one year down the road, members will be proud of having assisted in the collective endeavour of having created the Commission and of the results it will have achieved. Let me express the hope once again that the appeal made today by the President of the General Assembly will be heard not just by the donor countries, those with which we are familiar, but also by others. The appeal must be heard by all: the largest countries, the smallest ones, those that can afford it, rich or poor — I believe that this is a collective responsibility that must be assumed by one and all.

Mr. Pereyra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The recently created Peacebuilding Commission, an innovative body within the United Nations, is one outcome of the 2005 Summit and has Peru's full support, because it is helping to support peacebuilding

and reconstruction in States in countries emerging from armed conflict.

Recent history has shown that the premature withdrawal of peacekeeping operations often leads to a resurgence of conflict and violence. To make things worse, such an outcome often undermines the trust of the peoples concerned in the effectiveness of multilateral peace operations. Therefore the Peacebuilding Commission would appear to be the most appropriate mechanism to ensure the sustainability of peacebuilding processes.

The absence of a culture of peace, violence and the arbitrary exercise of power; marginalization of the weak and of minorities; and, in general terms, having to act solely on the basis of ensuring one's survival are elements that become permanent and structural in the framework of prolonged conflicts.

To redress such situations, it is necessary to reweave the social fabric and generate new democratic values of tolerance and participation. The key is to enlighten the people as to the fact that security and quality of life can truly take root only in a state of peace. To achieve those goals, an integrated approach is required that includes not only a military and police component to restore the security environment, but also an endeavour to rebuild public institutions, re-establish the rule of law and promote respect for human rights, as well as address economic and social structural aspects such as poverty and marginalization, which without doubt are at the root of many such conflicts.

Development is an essential component of peacebuilding. There will always be a greater risk of relapsing into conflict if the population feels vulnerable and if its situation does not improve objectively. The foundations for development must be laid through institution-building, in an atmosphere of justice and of respect for human rights and through the provision of services in the areas of health, education and security.

It is tremendously important also to bring about opportunities for social inclusion. A sustainable and viable peace process requires that those involved in the conflict be committed to the process and guide it in a responsible manner. In the final analysis, that is the only way to ensure that violence does not recur and destroy all that has been achieved.

In that context, inclusive processes are needed that create links of interdependence as well as obligations among the parties concerned. That helps to create common aspirations and objectives and to affirm a sense of belonging and national identity.

Furthermore, reconstruction programmes should not make the same mistakes that caused the State to fail. The idea is to build democratic societies with viable economies that can recover from disarray and overcome setbacks and therefore take charge of their destiny. Such processes should be adapted to each specific situation. Thus the Peacebuilding Commission should foster the development of national institutional capacities that can contribute to the formulation of comprehensive plans and projects that imbue national efforts with continuity and consistency, as well as give rise to international cooperation.

It is important appropriately to define areas of work and, whenever possible, to devise accurate indicators that make it possible to assess the progress made in the management capacity of a country emerging from conflict. Likewise, such indicators would also enable us to assess the relevance of and the progress made in the framework of the recommendations and assistance provided by the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation believes also that the Commission should contribute to enhancing coordination with the United Nations and the bodies of the system, so as to ensure optimal leadership on the ground and a clear mandate for the work to be carried out in the area of peacebuilding.

Likewise, it is relevant to recall that reconstruction is a process that should be of interest to private national and transnational companies. There is a need, therefore, to devise programmes that can attract such participation and, above all, strengthen State institutions. That will enable us to ensure that particular interests dovetail with general interests and that reconstruction programmes are carried out with transparency. It will also make it possible for the resources generated, including those from natural resources — a sensitive area — to benefit the population as a whole. That requirement should take priority in the context of the programmes of international financial institutions.

Finally, the delegation of Peru wishes to indicate that it is following with interest the cases of Sierra

Leone and of Burundi, currently under consideration in the Peacebuilding Commission. We hope that this process will be crowned with success, because the objective sought is one of crucial importance not only to present generations but also from a long-term perspective.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana welcomes the opportunity to participate once again in a debate on the Peacebuilding Commission as the country-specific meetings on Burundi and on Sierra Leone finalize their work plans in anticipation of field visits. We are pleased that the Peacebuilding Commission continues to be the object of intense interest among Member States because of its unique place in the United Nations system.

Ghana associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We warmly commend the Chairs of the country-specific meetings on their initiative in developing draft terms of reference for their field trips and a draft concept note on the design of integrated peacebuilding strategies. This represents yet another significant milestone towards making the Peacebuilding Commission a practical tool for achieving sustainable and irreversible peace in countries that are emerging from the tragedy of civil strife. We believe that the two drafts contain very concrete and useful proposals that deserve careful consideration and practical support. Ghana will participate fully and constructively in their consideration.

As Africa strives to overcome the vicissitudes of conflict and the attendant misery, the impact of the Peacebuilding Commission in Burundi and Sierra Leone will resonate among millions of people throughout the continent, and even beyond. Today, the concept of an international community that is committed to the progress and well-being of all of humanity has become an article of faith that is taken for granted. The mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission makes it a pillar of multilateralism in the twenty-first century. Development cooperation that is focused and efficient can make a truly decisive difference in the fortunes of war-torn nations and the most vulnerable segments of their populations.

Although not a donor agency, the Peacebuilding Commission, by bringing together all relevant stakeholders it should serve as a forum for dialogue and cooperation between national actors and the international community. It will thus benefit from lessons, expertise and experience gained over long years of close involvement in post-conflict recovery by such partners as the United Nations, donor agencies, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society.

On the other hand, this places enormous responsibilities on post-war national Governments, which must fact the challenge of reconciling their peoples and raising the level of their well-being. The principle of national ownership imposes the highest standards of governance on leaders, and at the same time confers on them much-needed legitimacy in the eyes not only of the population but also of development partners.

The Peacebuilding Commission itself, like any new establishment, will very likely encounter critical challenges as it grows. Indeed, we expect that the evaluation of the Commission's work in future will lead us to reinterpret and refine aspects of its mandate and its approaches to the work in the field, as dictated by circumstances. Consequently, the need for creativity and flexibility cannot be overstated.

Now that the Peacebuilding Commission has clearly demonstrated its determination to get off the ground and meet real-life challenges, we must give it all the encouragement and support it requires. Together, we can bequeath a safe and secure world to succeeding generations in fulfilment of the noble objectives of the United Nations.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomed the decision taken at the 2005 World Summit to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, just as we welcome the sustained efforts to operationalize it as a representative intergovernmental advisory body with the main purpose of translating the international community's will into concrete action and to assist countries emerging from conflict to embark and remain on the road to peace. In that regard, the Commission must remain a centre for analysis and consideration of concrete action in the field aimed at mastering critical situations in collaboration with diverse national actors. Here, the principal goal is to help rebuild States emerging from conflict.

In that connection, coordination among all external partners is no less crucial than coordination

among national actors — who must nonetheless retain ownership at all costs. The Commission must redouble its efforts to deal more swiftly with the cases now before it and to continue developing working methods that will enable it to make an impact working alongside the countries under consideration.

My delegation cannot fail to welcome the notable progress the Peacebuilding Commission has made in its consideration of the two cases before it and of the strategic frameworks developed together with the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone. But greater diligence on the part of the relevant United Nations entities is required to hasten the mobilization of resources. The Peacebuilding Fund must be provided with a simplified mechanism for disbursement enabling it to swiftly release the resources needed to ease the enormous social pressures felt by the countries concerned, whose major concern is to preserve the stability of their national institutions. At the same time, the Commission must work to ensure coherence in the interventions of various partners, thus providing a framework for harmonizing their contributions on the ground in such a way as to avoid disruptions that could undermine stabilization efforts.

Post-conflict situations are marked principally by weakened national governance with a weakened capacity to control developments that can determine the way in which the country moves forward. In such contexts the Peacebuilding Commission, with the legitimacy that the international community has granted it, should promote national collaboration with the participation of all sectors of society to seek solutions that can restore geopolitical balance through the promotion of constructive dialogue, including with civil society actors. Such constructive dialogue will make it possible expeditiously to restore the national consensus that is essential for normalizing the situation in a country emerging from conflict.

In that regard, the establishment in Sierra Leone of a national commission to direct peacebuilding efforts, with the participation of national actors, including civil society representatives and development partners, is a good example of best practices. Depending on the degree to which social infrastructure has been destroyed, its restoration can be of crucial importance in breaking the cycle of exclusion and in achieving peace. Clearly, we must help countries to move away from an existence marked by pervasive violence and emergency to a life of peace. Here, particular attention should be focused on financing for activities in the social sphere forming part of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

Looked at from another perspective, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission should lead to changes in the approach to the planning and deployment of peace missions. The Security Council should benefit from the contributions offered by the Peacebuilding Commission and provide new peace missions with integrated mandates that will make peacekeeping missions an integral part of the peacebuilding process, taking advantage of possible synergies on the ground in carrying out necessary reforms in a variety of areas.

In this context, particular attention must be paid to problems caused by continuing violations of human rights, especially those carried out by official security forces, which sometimes result in continued high levels of violence in societies emerging from conflict.

Let us not forget that we must help States to recover in a holistic manner — help the countries concerned to establish or restore the rule of law and a healthy and viable economy by promoting the establishment and strengthening of sustainable national institutions capable of ensuring that the political and economic system that results from the peace process is a lasting one.

If the actions of the United Nations and the international community are to be effective, the principal organs of the United Nations must work together on an ongoing basis. The opportunity for interaction provided by the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission must be fully exploited in order to compensate for the fact that the work of the organs is compartmentalized in an artificial way.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to assure the Commission and those in charge of its structures, as well as its members, of our support. We encourage them to continue resolutely to implement the mandate that has been entrusted to them with a view to ensuring that the international community works effectively with people in countries emerging from conflict. The Commission must now make a difference by effectively overcoming the shortcomings of the past, justifying fully the expectations that led to its creation.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for having convened, in such a timely manner, this necessary debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola for his dedicated work at the head of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Peacebuilding Commission is an expression of the new United Nations: a vigorous Organization that is starting off the new millennium with more resources, a stronger will, valuable experience and greater determination to combat the scourges that have afflicted humankind throughout its history.

The Peacebuilding Commission is an instrument by means of which the United Nations hopes to put an end to war by attacking its root causes and eradicating it through the meticulous building of peace. The vision of the heads of State or Government who came together at the 2005 World Summit could not have been better embodied than in the Commission, which crystallizes a vision of United Nations intervention in conflict that extends far beyond putting an end to hostilities and includes helping to build or rebuild the social and institutional fabric of countries torn apart by the pernicious consequences of war and violence.

Central American countries feel especially close to the Commission. Twenty-five years ago, our region was the victim of intolerance, foreign intervention and war between brothers. Then, we began to move forward. Exactly 20 years ago, all Central Americans achieved the Esquipulas Agreement, which put an end to hostilities and opened up the road to the future. We then turned to the United Nations, and it was in Central America that two of the Organization's most successful interventions took place, restoring peace and creating conditions that allowed all of us to live together, learn to practise tolerance and seek the road to a more prosperous future for all men and women in Central America.

If, as the representative of Germany, who spoke on behalf of the European Union, said this morning, the Peacebuilding Commission is to learn by doing, then Central Americans have an important contribution to make to its work. Ours was a difficult journey, and precisely for that reason it was one that was rich in lessons for the work of the Commission.

This may seem obvious, but it bears repeating: any peacebuilding process must begin by establishing trust between the parties to the conflict. In that decisive step, nothing can replace the legitimacy that the United Nations has in the eyes of all the belligerent parties. Beyond that, much work remains to be done, but that is what is needed: work and patience. The Organization has at its disposal that most powerful of instruments: its great legitimacy in the eyes of all the peoples of the world.

Here, ownership of the process by the actors themselves is another crucial factor. We join with previous speakers in stressing the need to hand over peacebuilding processes to national actors. Our intervention would be pointless if we did not include national priorities as a fundamental criterion for the provision of funds and assistance.

We would like to see the tangled legal web of rules of procedure sorted out as quickly as possible. We would also like the Commission to be more proactive — something that would be easier to achieve if, as the representative of Jamaica suggested on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organizational Committee were able to act as a forum for the planning, review and assessment of interventions by the Commission.

My delegation has been closely following this debate, as well as the debate on the issue held in the Security Council on 31 January, and we believe that it is time for the Peacebuilding Commission to promote a coherent and integrated strategy on the ground with the aim of bringing about lasting peace. Such an approach can come about only if the coordinating mechanism is inclusive, open and — most important — respectful of the priorities and needs identified by the receiving countries. Prompt, resolute and concerted action by the international community can then become a factor for success, inasmuch as its temporary and subsidiary character with respect to national efforts is clear and well defined.

An inclusive, transparent, constructive and creative approach is what is needed if we are to successfully address the many challenges that arise when armed conflict comes to an end. Peacebuilding goes hand in hand with human security, and it is possible only on the basis of the reconstruction of social institutions, the establishment of the rule of law, the primacy of human rights and the promotion of sustainable development. If these are to become a reality, innovative initiatives will be required that take

advantage of the structures and knowledge that exist within the United Nations. We therefore support the initiative of El Salvador with regard to the establishment of the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned.

Costa Rica today reiterates its commitment to peacebuilding as a concept and to the Commission as a structure prepared to give shape to United Nations efforts in that respect.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974, I now call on the observer for the European Community.

Mr. Valenzuela (European Community): Let me at the outset thank the President for convening this important debate.

I wish first to refer to the statement delivered this morning by the Permanent Representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union, with which we fully align ourselves. Let me therefore focus on a few complementary points on behalf of the European Community, in our capacity as a systematic donor to peacebuilding actions worldwide.

The European Community joins those speakers who have highlighted today the need for the Peacebuilding Commission to be field- and result-oriented. Indeed, the ability of the Peacebuilding Commission to have a positive impact on peacebuilding processes in the field will, at the end of the day, be the tangible yardstick by which success is measured.

This success will depend on several elements. National ownership is, of course, the central one, especially in the case of post-conflict societies where the ruins of division are most apparent. National ownership must rest on an inclusive national political dialogue which also involves civil society.

Both Burundi and Sierra Leone are already engaged in processes with the international community. The European Community alone is currently programming with each of those two countries an assistance package in the range of $250 million per country, under the tenth European Development Fund. As part of national ownership, the challenge for the national authorities is to be consistent in the various processes in which they are engaged. Coordination and consultation with and among donors in the field is crucial to ensure a convergent approach. Jointly agreed overarching frameworks, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, are key elements to guiding the countries and their partners in such endeavours.

By bringing together international stakeholders and experience with the countries under consideration, the main expected added value of the Peacebuilding Commission is the development of the actual peacebuilding strategies it is mandated to advance. These strategies could serve as a guide and catalyst for the interventions of the international community.

In a welcome first step, the Peacebuilding Commission has already defined priority areas. But more conceptual work is needed in order to define the form and content of genuine peacebuilding strategies. In this respect, we look forward to the forthcoming work of the Peacebuilding Commission — notably, the first meeting on lessons learned — as well as the design of integrated peacebuilding strategies on which a concept note has just been circulated by the Peacebuilding Support Office.

The Peacebuilding Fund has a role of its own to play as a swift gap-filling and flexible peacebuilding facility, a role that more traditional development instruments cannot always play as easily. In our view, the focus here must be not on quantity, but on quality money, the key being to ensure that the right urgent needs are met, whilst avoiding duplication and gaps vis-à-vis existing efforts. To that end, the necessary consultations and mapping exercises engaged in with donors and actors in the field are not delaying or bureaucratic factors, but rather a way to ensure that the Peacebuilding Fund effectively addresses the urgent gaps that might prevail in, for example, election funding in the case of Sierra Leone, or the implementation of peace and ceasefire agreements in the case of Burundi.

Within the European Union, and with its specific field experience and expertise, the European Community is ready to continue to contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We agree with the numerous statements made that have underscored that the Peacebuilding Commission should be more than a funding mechanism or a donor-coordination mechanism. In this respect, we eagerly look forward to the development of the Commission's peacebuilding strategy concept. Its quality will be decisive in ensuring the buy-in of donors and in allowing for the

much-needed broadening of the donor base in both countries currently under consideration.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on the agenda items under consideration. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 47, 113 and 149.

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to inform members that a summary of today's deliberations will be transmitted to Member States tomorrow, Wednesday, 7 February 2007.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.